



## A MENTOR IS MANDATORY AT ADOLESCENCE

Dr. Anshu Rupainwar

Dept. of Education, Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty), Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Lucknow-226025

Adolescence is the age of transition, a stage of high energy, as well as stress and storm. This needs special guidance for adolescents to cope up with the situation. It is a vulnerable time when kids can develop unhealthy habits that grow into problems in their adult life. Behavioral issues of adolescence, which are quite common, also crop up during this time, making it impossible for parents to reach out to their teenagers.

Adolescence is not an easy time for High school children or parents. The only way to deal with needs and problems at this age is to know about them beforehand and be ready to face them. And for such a purpose education is the best way to deal with. Before entering in this phase of life, a teenager should know how to manage energy and mixed emotions. This can be achieved only through correct guidance given at the correct time whether by the teacher or by parents or anybody else.

Education is a dynamic and innovative experience of life. It is a continuous process. The process of teaching-&-learning goes on till our last breath. If we talk in the context of Adolescence Education, it gives a direction to the efforts put by a child to transform his/her dreams into realities. It also enriches a particular personality with multiple dimensions at cognitive level, affective level as well as psycho-motor level to make a person more competent in all aspects of his personality viz. physical, mental, emotional and psychological.

Adolescence (High school age) isn't just about fashion, friends, and parties. Kids also have a lot of educational activities instored on their plate. Pressure to perform academically and get college admissions can be stressful thus making your teenager moody. Juggling school work, extra-curricular activities (must for college admissions) and chores at home can be tiring. Distractions at school due to change in attitude and approach towards life, can result in poor academic performance, that adds to the pressure.

Apart from the pscychological changes, the child begins to experience biological changes that appear new and difficult to handle at times.

The following are the challenges faced by the teenager's due to change in their hormone levels:

- Change of voice and appearance of facial hair in boys is perhaps the most prominent change that takes place during adolescence.
- Acne is one of the major problems at this stage.
- Muscle gain sometimes leads to excessive body weight in teens.
- The growth of pubic hair in girls and boys.
- Body odor becomes evident.
- Development of full breasts in girls can be awkward in the beginning. Girls may start to feel conscious about their figure.
- The menstrual cycle starts in girls.
- Hormones affect the teenagers not only physically but also emotionally.
- Adolescence is the age between adulthood and childhood. Teenagers are often confused about their role between their responsibilities as growing adults and their desires as children.
- Flooded emotions lead to mood swings that can make them happy, excited, mad or angry anytime for anything or everything.
- Even children may feel weird at onset of early puberty.
- Adolescent girls are sensitive to crying.
- Bodily changes result in self-consciousness and feeling of inferiority or superiority among social group.
- Overwhelming emotions can lead to impulsive behavior.
- The tendency to take risk encourages most teens to try smoking or drinking even before they are of legal age.
- Teenagers have a hectic schedule as they hop from one activity to another with little time to eat or rest properly.
- Unhealthy eating habits prevent them from getting the nutrition they need.
- Eating disorders are also psychosomatic as they start with the adolescent having a poor self-image and the need to change the way they look by any means.
- Consciousness about their body can lead to eating disorders, especially in girls.
- Teenagers may have self-esteem or confidence issues. The feelings of inferiority or superiority often arise from their appearance, and acceptance of their body – skin color, beauty, and figure.
- Poor performance in academics and low IQ can also demoralize them. They develop the 'I'm not good enough' attitude towards life.
- Depression is one of the common psychological problems associated with adolescence.
- The stress and pressure of adolescence can create anxiety related issues, while mood swings can lead to conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder.
- Attraction to the opposite sex begins during puberty. Adolescence is the time when their sexual or reproductive organs start developing. At such a vulnerable time, it is but natural for kids to feel awkward in social situations.
- Teenagers want to have an identity of their own. They tend to look up to role models at home or outside.
- Adolescents also start thinking about what is 'right' and 'wrong' and question your take on certain things.
- They need time to understand and get comfortable with their sexuality. Girls and boys start experiencing 'weird' feelings towards the other sex and may not know what to do about it.
- This is the time they start dating. Your adolescent may not be comfortable talking to you about it and may go with little information or misinformation they have about it.
- Competition is another important aspect of a teenager's social life. Your child may compete with her peers in about anything and everything. Their spirit of competition speaks a lot about their perception of self – whether they have a positive self-esteem or a negative one.
- Sexual feelings and thoughts of sex may seem wrong to an adolescent, because of which they may feel guilty.
- Their social circle expands during this time as they seem occupied interacting with friends on social media sites, through their phone and outside.
- The advent of social media has changed the way we interact with each other. It has affected teenage lifestyles the most. Your teen may seem to spend hours on phone, texting, talking or simply playing.
- Aggression is especially a concern with adolescent boys. Young boys start to

develop muscles, grow tall and have a coarser, manly voice.

- Boys may fall into bad company and be drawn to acts of violence, vandalism, and aggression. They could be easily swayed to own or use a firearm or a weapon too.
- Sometimes adolescents addicted to the internet tend to have fewer friends and a less active social life. They lead solitary lives and are happy browsing the internet for hours decreases physical activities, resulting in unhealthy and sedentary lifestyle and poor academic performance.
- Teenage girls are likely to suffer violence or aggression by a partner.

#### **Role of parents as a mentor:**

To cope up with the situation the best way is to act like an understanding parent or a close friend. You can help your teenager sail through the stage easily to make them aware of these changes. Explain them that it is normal for the body to change as every teenager goes through it. Help them adapt to these changes – acknowledge the change and help them accept it. Enable them to stay healthy and fit by taking a nutritious diet and following a fitness regime. Try to engage them in sports or other such activities which helps them to get relaxed physically and mentally. Listen to them as a friend without judging and avoid giving them advices when they are not ready for it. Share your experiences of puberty or let them talk to an older sibling who has gone through the same. Engage them in a creative activity to channelize their emotions. Let them know that we love them just as they are. Encourage them to be true to themselves and not take on a personality just to please others. Gaining our child's trust is important if we want to help him with behavioral issues. Talk to them and listen to what they have to say. Do not judge or criticize them, as it could worsen their behavior. Keep an eye on your child's behavior. Look for erratic behavior and change in his or her appetite, sleep patterns, and moods.

Do not spy on them or accuse them of any wrongdoing. Encourage them to talk and be honest. Tell them what your concerns are and discuss the problem with them. Nutrition and exercise can help them get the strength and endurance they need to get through the hectic high school period. Support your kid's aspirations for college education as what they need is the encouragement to do well. We could cut down their household chores to enable them to focus on their school projects when needed.

Parental guidance can help abate health problems in adolescence to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Lead by example and encourage your children to eat healthy food, exercise right and sleep on time. Ensure they get nutrition through their meals. Give them a balanced diet. Be there for them emotionally and physically as this will help them deal with any possible disorders as depression.

Most of the time, talking about the problems and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can prevent the onset of depression. Do not brush away their feelings, as that can make things worse. Your child may seem to spend more time outside than with you. Accept that your adolescents are discovering a whole new world. Just let them know you are there when they need you. Sharing your past experiences in school can put them at ease sometimes. Do not assume that your child is addicted to the internet just because he or she spends a lot of time in front of the computer. They could be doing more productive things on the system other than surfing the net. Enroll them in activities that encourage them to interact with others. Have family activities that will make them want to spend less time at the computer. Children tend to imitate what they see at home. Teach your children to be kind and considerate. Nurturing relationships at home can help them become less aggressive.

Teach them life skills and the importance of compassion. Lead them by being their model. In case of hyper sensitivity, if necessary, get the adolescent the appropriate treatment.

#### **Role of a teacher as a mentor:**

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former president of India was a great inspiring illustration as a great teacher and role model for youth of today's India. He always acted like a mentor for adolescents or we can say high school children. He educated millions of children of different age and taught about the importance of moral values and good conduct. He believed in drawing out the innate capacities and hidden talents of adolescents and produces a skillful and self satisfied youth lot by providing them opportunities to explore their ideas and creativity. He promoted entrepreneurial attitude in youth of the country. Thus engaged mind has no place for destruction.

Therefore, a growing adolescent can acquire a balanced personality and contribute to our nation as a worthy empowered youth. According to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam the minds of adolescents should be provided a mentor at early stage of school life so that their minds could be engaged in goal oriented constructive activities. At this stage try to enhance their creative potential by providing opportunities and exploring their innovative ideas and draw out their hidden skills by giving appreciation and encouragement. Thus, adolescent education, given at right time is the best way for optimum utilization of high energy and innovative ideas of our young generation and this leads to worthy youth not only for our fami-

lies, our societies but our nation also. As youth are future of the nation so we should take special care of our youth community by giving them formal and informal worthy education and contribute to our national income and make our international standing in the world.

The modern concept of education means to develop the innate capacities of a child in the social environment. It prepares an individual to achieve the desired destinations of empowering intellectual capacities and on the other hand molds individual's innate worthy qualities of personality into utility skill, accepted and needed by our societies. These acquired skills empower the particular individual to attain a sustained survival and spend a purposeful and satisfying life.

According to Dr. Kalam a teacher should act as a facilitator and not a dictator. The researcher analyzed the role of a teacher through Dr. Kalam's writings and other sources and referred that teacher should be a friend, a guide and a knowledgeable person who can satisfy a knowledge hunger and can give an appropriate and logical solution to a problem of his students. Since Dr. Kalam is himself a good teacher and has given preference to teaching in his whole career, he has some expectation from teacher.

The teacher should have faith in his student. Individual differences should also be considered by the teacher during teaching sessions and provide moral support at the time of difficulty.

Appreciation and reward are the tools for a teacher for motivating his students to succeed. Teacher should be a path maker and a path searcher for his students especially high school children (adolescents), who are in the state of confusion or conflict (stress and storm). Teacher should be dedicated towards his profession and progressively go ahead in search of practical knowledge, which provide emotional assistance in dealing with students efficiently. Further, the researcher concluded that according to Dr. Kalam a teacher should create an autonomous learner who achieved his goals through the support and guidance of his teacher, like a ladder which is always there for everyone to climb, without changing his/her position and performance.

Class room learning is as important as learning by self-observation outside the class room. Beside this, the teacher in the school has great responsibility in shaping the character of the student especially during the high school age or at the age of adolescence. Since this is the age of stress and storms for every child, school must provide needed and correct guidance to cope up with this situation by providing moral science classes and friendly environment to the students to share their problems and by satisfying their curiosities. Any academic performance variation in the student must be noticed and the counseling session must immediately commence. The school should have constant interaction with the parents of the student and give and take regular feedback about the behavior of the student. Thus the school plays an important role in healthy personality development of a child and contributes in shaping an emotionally stable and balanced citizen to the country. Beside this aspect a school must have morally good and competent teachers to impart practical and worthy education to provide purposeful education along with well equipped environment for effective learning.

Educated individuals are expected to be better equipped to meet the challenges of life. Increased efficiency, constructive participation in social events and processes, harmony in social and personal relationships, sustaining development and equitable social order are some of the other expected benefits.

Kalam said that, "Education gives you wings of fly. Achievement comes out of fire in our sub-conscious mind that "I will win", "I will win". So each one of you will have "wings of fire" to fly."

#### **'Wings To Fly'**

"I am born with potential.  
I am born with goodness and trust.  
I am born with ideas and dreams.  
I am born with greatness.  
I am born with confidence.  
I am born with wings.  
I am not meant for crawling,  
So I won't, I have wings,  
I will fly, fly and fly"

"Education gives us wings to fly. Achievement comes out of fire in our subconscious mind that "I will win". The wings of fire will indeed lead to knowledge, which will make you to fly as a Doctor, or an Engineer, or a scientist, or a teacher, or a political leader, or a bureaucrat or a diplomat or anything you want to be."

These, inspirational lines of Dr. Kalam gives courage and built confidence in children of the country to deal with problems of the life patiently and intelligently, and never give up before reaching to their desired targets. He emphasized on excellence in thinking and action.

At school age, child comes in contact with different children, participates in different activities, and interacts with different teachers when he/she goes from one

class to another or one level of education to another. Thus he/she encounters a number of problems.

According to Kalam, a teacher or a mentor shows him/her the path of success and prosperity by providing the guidance at the time of need. Most of the time the teacher may help the students to planning their future career by showing the right path to accomplish their dreams. Teacher guidance may help the students by,

- Understanding them as a learner.
- Knowing their strengths and weaknesses in different areas (cognitive and non-cognitive)
- Adjusting them-selves to varied situations within their total environment.
- Realizing their own potential.
- Working with most capacities, interests, motivation to fulfill their needs.
- Understanding the problem and solve them independently.
- Developing the ability to analyze the situation and to make their decision widely.
- Making their own unique contribution for welfare of the society with fullest potential.
- Selecting appropriate educational and vocational courses, based on their potential.
- Putting the best effort to fulfill their dream true.

Thus according to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, a teacher plays various roles in his professional life, in developing a healthy personality of a student as well as in plotting the base for their career.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had faith in power of youth, a well grown adolescent or high school child. According to him, Individual differences in attitudes are observed in students. Maturity levels, planned and random experiences, physical surroundings, extent of warmth exhibited, democracy and indulgence in home environment, schooling, playmates and exposure to media are not the same for everyone. Attitude towards cheating and stealing is different in children of different age. In the same way, adolescents differ in their attitude towards authority (teacher, principal, leader and parents) depending on the satisfaction or figure of dissatisfaction they derive during the course of their interaction with them. Dr. Kalam had interaction with children and youth of the whole world, especially high-school children. This age is considered as adolescent age, as age of stress and storm. But due to hormonal changes, adolescents are more active and curious and needs more attention. Dr. Kalam's motivational lectures and speeches and sufficient knowledge are become the guide for children to satisfy their knowledge hunger at this crucial stage of adolescent's life even after him through his books and other literatures and e-speeches and e-lecture. He shows the right path to children and diverts their energies towards the realistic and worthy goals of life. He tried to know about their suppressed desires and dreams and gave the logical and practical solution of their problems. And for such a great purpose Dr. Kalam had frequent interaction and questioning sessions with high school children at various educational places all over India. And put his best effort of him to convert their negative energy into positive one and utilized it for transforming the developing nation into a developed nation. Beside the above good cause, interaction with youth and children is a passion and aim of Kalam's life. He wanted to know their dreams and tell them, those were perfectly all right to dream of a good life, an abundant life, a life full of pleasures and comforts and work for that golden era.

A logical and applicable educational model is the basic demand of present day education system and its curriculum.

Dr. Kalam said, "Having met and interacted with youth and families, we discuss at this point the important elements that can remove the urge in young minds for acquiring wealth through wrong means and that can cultivate in them the yearning for a higher goal. Above all, we stress the ability to enjoy the success of the others, which is indeed the highest order of emotional intelligence. Here we recommended to all the educational institutions in the nation to include in the curriculum the following oath for all students up to the age of seventeen.

#### **AN OATH OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BY THE YOUTH:**

- I realize I have to set a goal in my life. To achieve the goal, I will acquire the knowledge, I will work hard, and when the problem occurs, I have to defeat the problem and succeed.
- As a youth of my nation, I will work and work with courage to achieve success in all my tasks and enjoy the success of others.
- I shall always keep myself, my home, my surroundings, neighbourhood and

environment clean and tidy.

- I realize righteousness in the heart leads to beauty in the character, beauty in the character brings harmony in the home, harmony in the home leads to order in the nation and order in the nation leads to peace in the world.
- If imbibed from a young age, this oath will help the growth of a righteous mind in the youth, steer them towards a purposeful life, and remove all the stresses, thereby building future citizens with healthy mind and bodies."

Thus, Dr. Kalam's philosophy of life as well as education has some uniqueness in their concepts and approaches. His thoughts and ideas show that Kalam believed in child's innate powers and potential to transform a developing nation into a developed one through proper educational guidance and amenities. He wanted to motivate youth of the country to utilize their positive energy in the welfare and development of their families, societies and of course for their nations. According to Dr. Kalam that it will be possible only through enlightened citizens well equipped with knowledge power, which comes through education.

On the other hand, the young mind's growth keeps pace with a widening range of consciousness and each step forward can be an extremely painful and laborious achievement. During youth the demands of life put an end to childhood, for example the transitions to marriage and a career.

Achievements, usefulness and getting established are ways to proceeding out from the problem of the period of youth. People can adopt what they have been given from the past (at the stage of adolescence) to the possibilities and demands of future.

Consequently, mentoring for youth development is gaining prominence as a way to help adolescents become competent, engaged, and responsible youth. A mentor whether he/she is a mother/father or a teacher provides opportunities and support to help youth gain the competencies and knowledge they need to meet the increasing challenges they will face as they mature.

Since, the mentoring can be a dynamic catalyst for the achievement of transition goals and can have a dramatic impact on a young person's life.

Thus, we feel the need of a true mentor at the age of adolescent for producing a healthy as well as worthy youth for our families, societies as well as for our nation.

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